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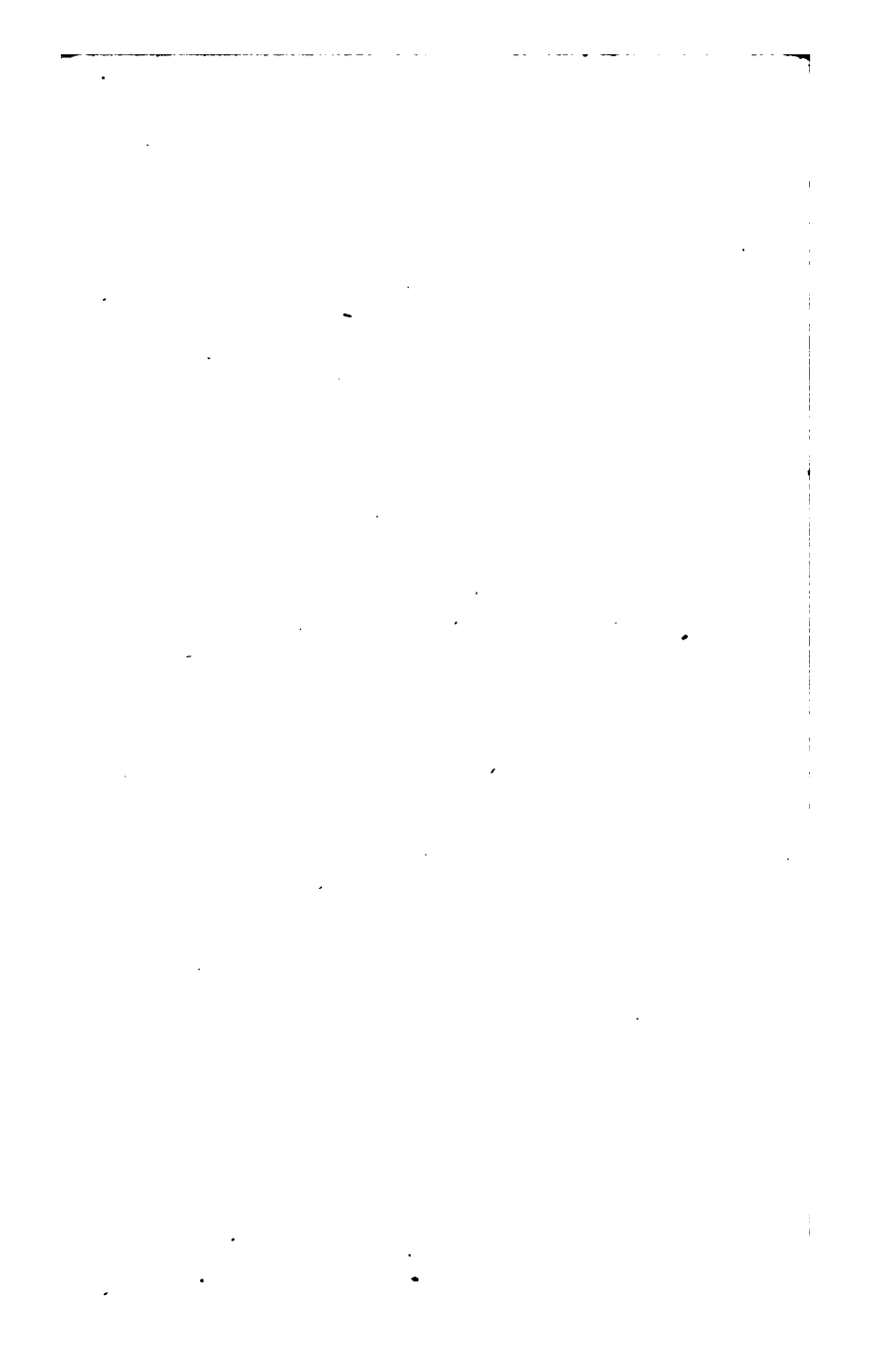
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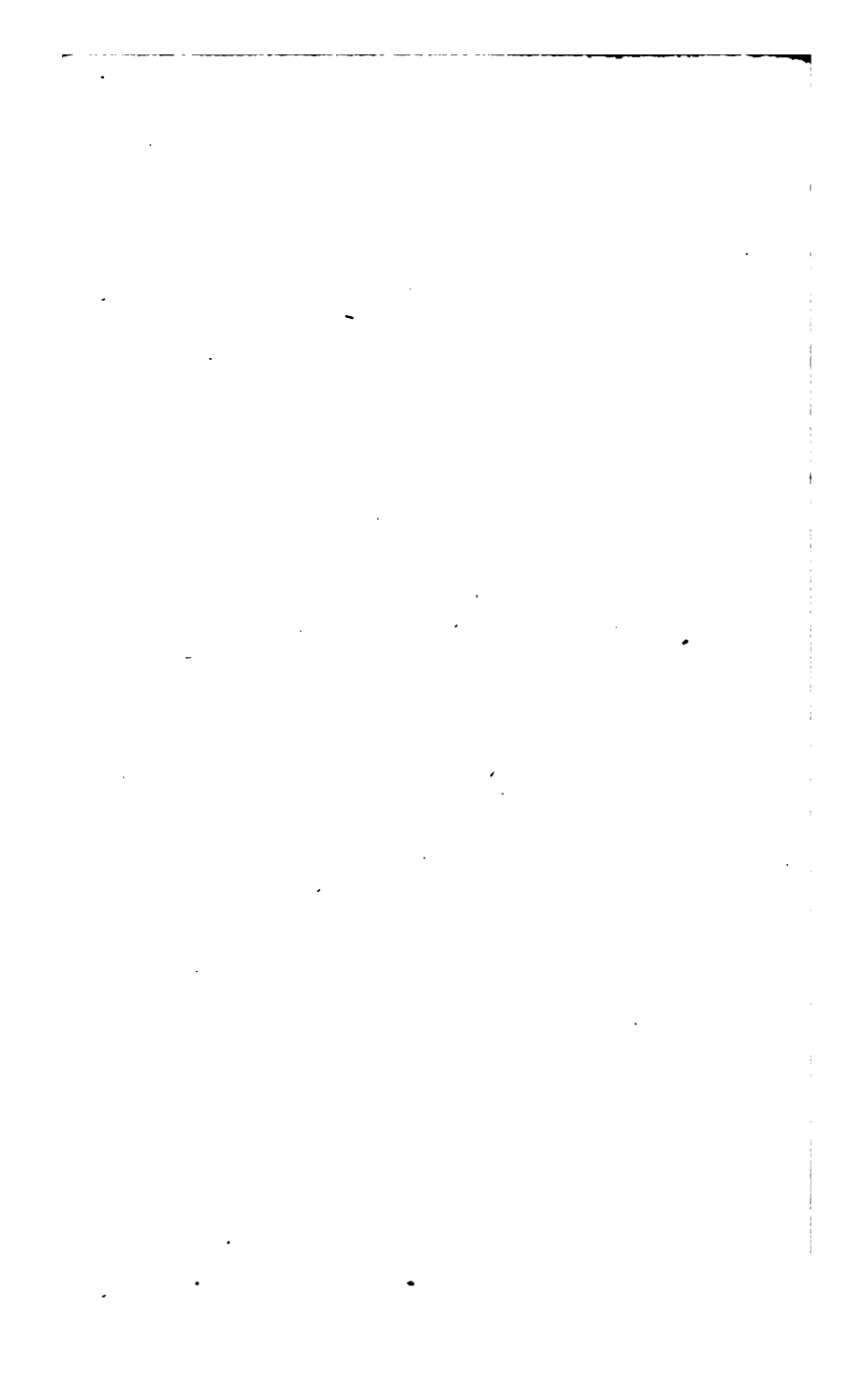
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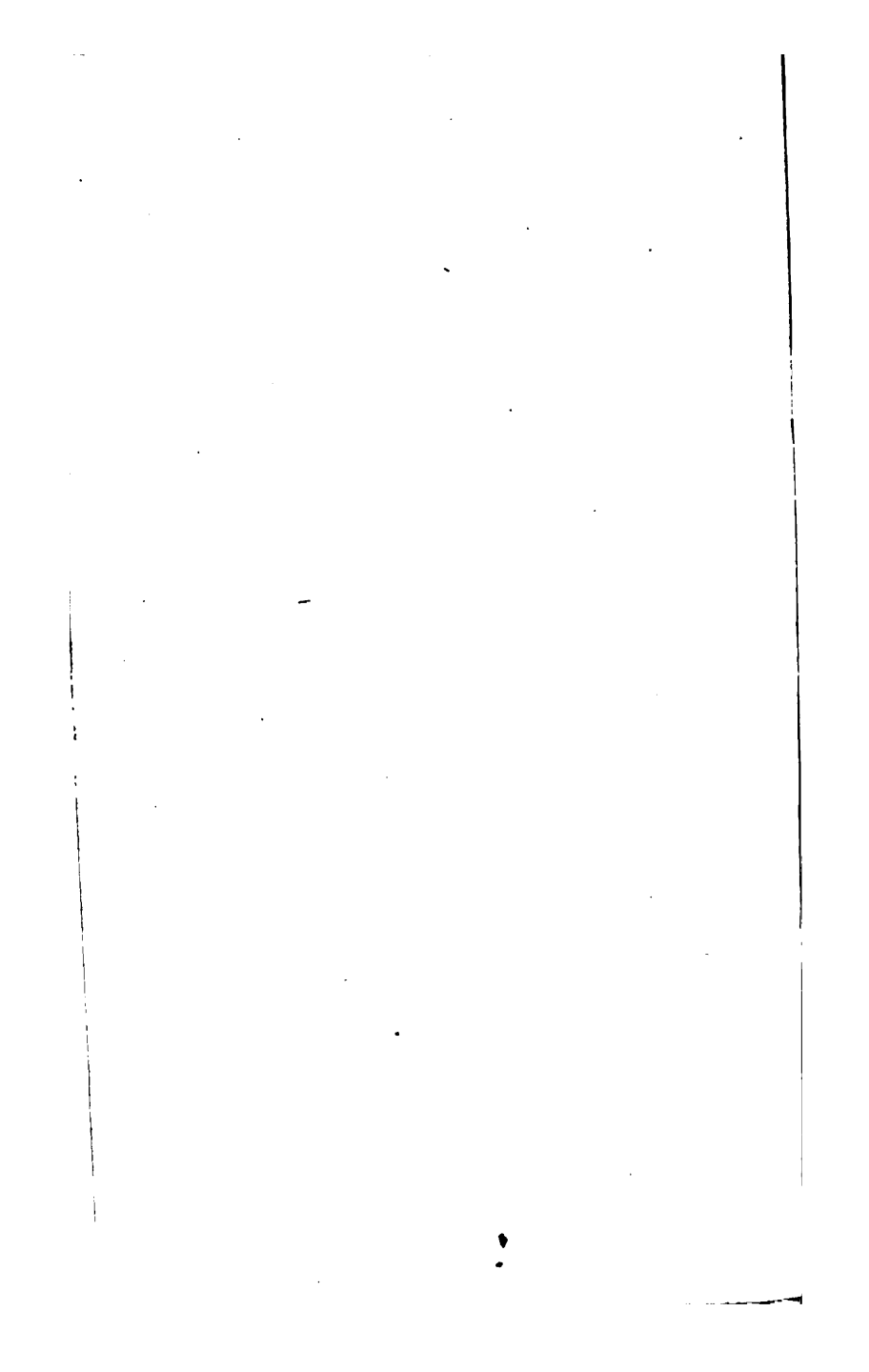
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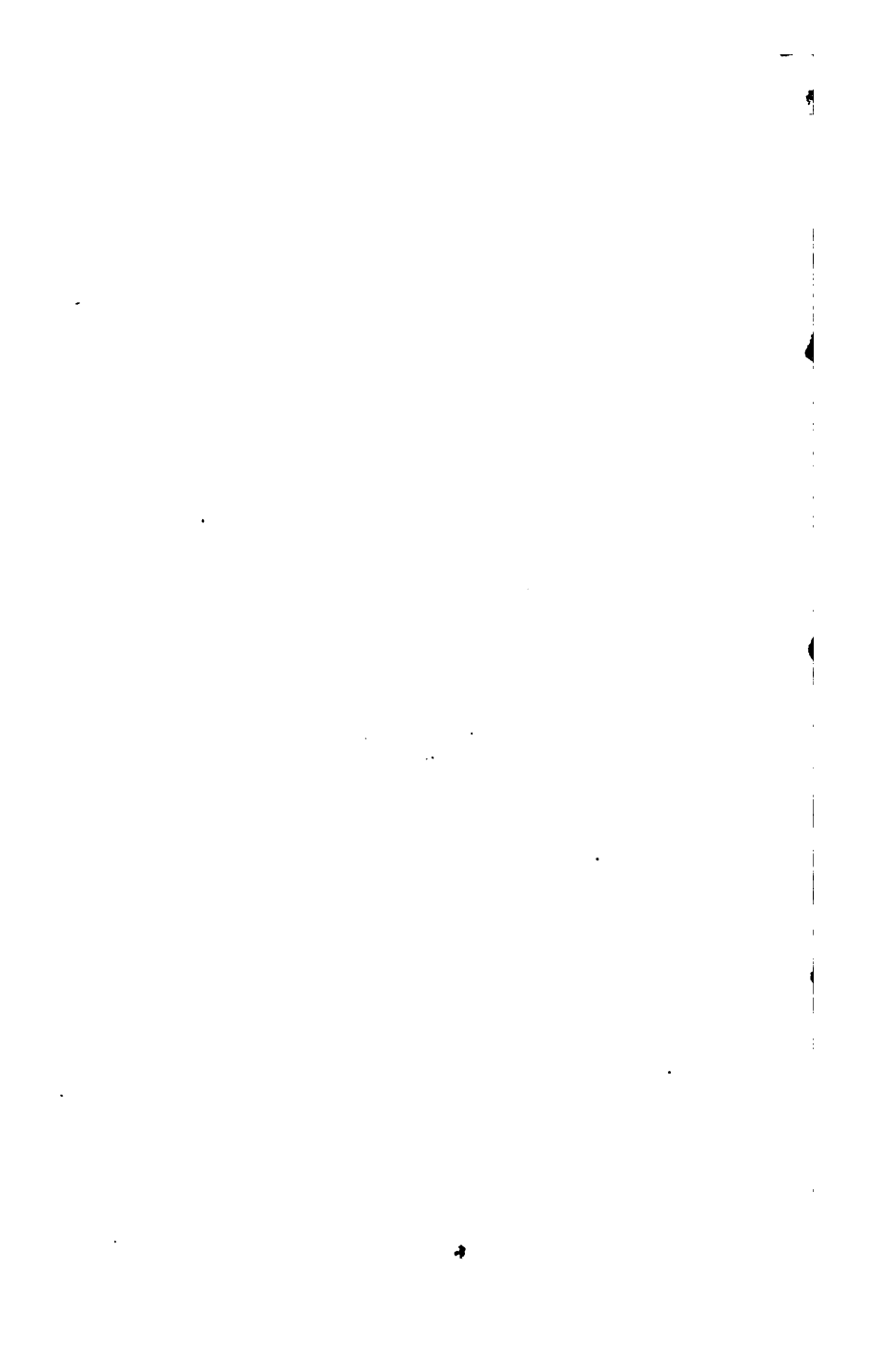






THOUGHTS ON TRIALS.





**Thoughts on Trials,**

WITH AN

ILLUSTRATION OF

**PATIENCE PERFECTED.**



—  
"Let patience have her perfect work."—Jas. i. 4.  
—

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These "THOUGHTS ON TRIALS," (originally addressed to a Friend), are now most respectfully inscribed to Those who have so long and so sedulously ministered to the necessities of One, who is a living example of Patience, under a very severe and protracted affliction, and whose case is cited in the following pages.

*January, 1854.*



# THOUGHTS ON TRIALS.

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## CHAPTER I.

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“OH, who could bear life’s stormy doom,  
Did not Thy word of love  
Come, brightly bearing through the gloom  
A peace-branch from above !

Then sorrow, touch’d by Thee grows bright  
With more than rapture’s ray ;  
As darkness shews us worlds of light,  
We never saw by day.”

---

MY DEAR S——,

To you, as well as to myself, a large portion of suffering has been allotted, and we have both felt sorely tried,—*how* sorely none but He who appointed our trials, and ourselves can ever know, but—

“OH ! that to us life’s changes  
Would so with blessings come,

That mercies might, like gales of spring  
Cause some new grace to bloom ;

And that the storm which scattereth  
Each earth-born hope abroad,  
Might anchor those of holier birth  
More firmly on our God !”



“In the day of adversity,” we are enjoined to “consider,” and I therefore resolved to devote some of my afflicted moments to searching through God’s Word for all that could throw light on His providential designs towards His tried ones, as well as on what should be my own course of duty while in the furnace. I not only searched the Word, but I sought interpretations of it, from the writings of those I deemed most capable of understanding it, as well as expressions of feeling, under trial, both in prose and verse, which were in accordance with my own experience. The doing so has furnished an occupation congenial with my present state of spirit and circumstances, and I have found it, in no small measure, soothing to my mind.

Perhaps a perusal of my extracts, which in some cases are given verbatim, in others not, may serve in *some* degree, to soothe your sorrows also,

and to these I will venture to add a few such texts, as have either enlightened or comforted *me*, although I may not give one with which you are not familiar.

My attempts to offer you consolation shall not stop even here, but I will present to your view a *sketch* of a living manifestation of God's faithfulness to those who trust Him, though the furnace should be heated "seven times." I only wish you could yourself have the opportunity of becoming acquainted with the original of what must be a most imperfect portrait,—imperfect not only on account of the medium through which it is given, but because, were I to do more than sketch it, I should fear to betray the confidence of the sufferer, or to wound the delicacy of those who minister so sedulously, and so beautifully to her necessities, and in whom she recognizes instruments chosen of God in her behalf.

But ere I allude farther to this interesting example of "*Patience perfected*," I will give you the reply of an eminent and holy man, to a question which, doubtless you, as well as myself, have often asked, viz: "For what *end* does God permit heavy trials to befall so many of His *children*?" I am not now enquiring why they are



sent to those who neither care to know, fear, or obey the Almighty, for a "needs be" in their case, might seem apparent, both for chastisement and correction, and because great evils require severe remedies ; but I am asking why they should be dispensed to those who desire, too, (feebly though it may be) to know and do His holy will, and still more, to those who seemed to live wholly to His praise and glory ?

"The Apostle," says my authority, "gives us a plain and direct answer to this important question," "That the trial of their faith, which is much more precious than gold that perisheth, though it be tried by fire, may be found unto praise, and honour, and glory, at the revelation of Jesus Christ." Now gold tried by fire is thus purified and separated from its dross, and so is faith in the fire of temptation ; the more it is tried, the more it is purified ! and not only purified, but also strengthened, confirmed, increased abundantly. This then, to increase our faith, is one gracious end of God's permitting manifold temptations. They serve to try, to purify, to confirm, and to increase that living hope also, whereunto the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ hath begotten us again of His abundant mercy ; and thus hope

increases our joy in the Lord, and in the midst of sufferings, enables the partaker of them, to "rejoice with joy unspeakable, and full of glory." The trials which increase faith and hope, increase love also ; for the more the glory of Heaven is realized, the more do they love Him, who hath purchased it for them.

There is another use of adversity and trials, "to those who are exercised thereby,"—the advancement of holiness ; holiness of heart, and holiness of life, for sanctified afflictions produce humility, abase our self-will, and bring us to seek and expect both our strength and happiness from God ; and if faith, love, and holiness be either produced or increased by suffering, what unspeakable gain will it be found to have been, in that great day when the workings of Providence, and of the inner life, with its fruits, shall all be realized, and every one shall be judged "according to his works."

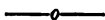
Afflictions, however heavy, however prolonged they may have been, will then appear but as light and momentary, in comparison of the "exceeding weight of glory," which they shall, by the grace of God, "have worked out for us."

"The most conspicuous, perhaps, of the fruits

of sanctified affliction, is that beautiful virtue, Patience!—the proper object of patience being suffering either in mind or body. It does not imply not *feeling* this: it is not apathy or insensibility; it is at the utmost distance from stoical stupidity, or from fretfulness and dejection. The patient believing sufferer is preserved from falling into either of these extremes, by considering who is the author, or permitter of all his suffering, even God, his Father;—what is the *motive* of His *allowing* us to suffer?—not so properly His justice as His love: and what the end of it? *Our profit*, “that *we* may be partakers of His holiness.”

“PATIENCE! oh! ’tis a grace divine,  
Sent from the God of pow’r and love,  
That leans upon its Father’s hand,  
As thro’ the wilderness we move.

By patience we serenely bear  
The troubles of our mortal state,  
And wait contented our discharge,  
Nor think our glory comes too late.”



Why fear the path of grief to tread,  
Why Father shrink from Thy decree,  
If thus my erring soul be led  
A safer, shorter way to Thee!

On wings of faith, o'er mists of earth,  
 Thy servant, Father, teach to rise,  
 And view the blessing's native worth,  
 Cleared from affliction's dark disguise.

Yon clouds,—a mass of sable shade  
 To mortals gazing from below,  
 By angels from above surveyed,  
 With universal sun-shine glow.

## CHAPTER II.

"If thou faint in the day of adversity, thy strength is small."—*Prov.* xxiv. 10.

"In the day of adversity consider."—*Ecc.* vii. 14.

"But thou, O man of God, follow after righteousness, godliness, faith, love, patience, meekness."—1 *Tim.* vi. 11.]

"Add to temperance, patience; and to patience, godliness."—2 *Pet.* i. 6.

You shall now have that exemplification of patience, under a very protracted trial, which I promised to give you, and remember that this patience is *still* in exercise,—this suffering is yet in existence; I write not of the dead, but of the living, unlike a laudatory inscription on a tomb-

stone, (the applicability of which may not seldom be doubted, although into its correctness, it might be invidious to enquire,) I give you a simple statement of one, who is at this moment exciting the sympathy and interest of many excellent Christians, and who is also the object of commiseration and wonder to many, who, as yet, know nothing of that hidden life, derived from above, which so beautifully sustains her under a trial from which humanity *must* shrink. Clergymen and others, who know her intimately, could more than testify to the truthfulness of my little sketch. They would indeed deem it tame, and devoid of the life and colouring of the original, and could doubtless furnish many interesting touches which my hand has omitted to give.

As I have sat by her humble bed, how often have I longed to attain to a like precious state of faith and pious resignation; but oh! a like *discipline*!—should I not shrink from *that*?

“OFT in life’s stillest shades reclining,  
 And desolation unrepining,  
 Meek souls there are, who little dream  
 Their daily life an angel’s theme;  
 Or that the rod they take so calm  
 Shall prove in Heaven a Martyr’s palm.”

COME, resignation ! spirit meek,  
 And let me kiss thy placid cheek,  
 And read in thy pale eye serene  
 Their blessing, who by faith can wean  
 Their hearts from sense, and learn to love  
 God only, and the joys above.

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### CHAPTER III.

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"Though I walk in the midst of trouble, Thou wilt  
 revive me."—*Psa. cxxxviii. 7.*

"Cast thy burden upon the Lord, and He shall sustain  
 thee."—*Psa. lv. 22.*

"Though He cause grief, yet will He have compas-  
 sion according to the multitude of His mercies : for He doth  
 not afflict willingly, nor grieve the children of men."—  
*Lam. iii. 32, 33.*

"Thou wilt keep him in perfect peace, whose mind is  
 stayed on Thee ; because he trusteth in Thee."—*Isa. xxvi. 3.*

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IT is now about twelve years since I was residing  
 for some time at a Hydropathic Establishment,  
 situated in one of the most lovely spots in England.  
 The physical energies of the patients were there of  
 course, systematically exercised, and their frequent  
 walks were prescribed. In one of these, the Lady

Matron of the place, invited me to accompany her to see an out-patient of no ordinary character, and enduring no ordinary sufferings. I willingly acceded to her proposal, and with her entered a pretty thatched cottage, situated in a rural lane in the immediate vicinity of the establishment; if the exterior were inviting from its white-washed front and pretty garden, the interior was not less so; and through a clean little anti-room, I was conducted to a very small chamber on the same floor, where a tent-bed with white hangings took up the greater part of the room. My companion placed a chair by the bed-side, and thence I became engrossed by its occupant. The countenance that there met mine, and smilingly bade me welcome, I shall never forget; physical suffering, and serious thoughtfulness, had left their impress there, but only to give a mellowness to the predominant expression of beaming love and gentleness. Her countenance bore no hue of sickness, and but for the position she was constrained to occupy, one might have thought, she was but for some passing ailment thus laid low; but, alas! no slight matter would have confined that active spirit, and that formerly vigorous frame, in those narrow precincts. What then kept her there?

Her little story was soon told: but the fearful calamity under which she was labouring, was not doomed to be of the same brief character, for, as I saw her then, so saw I her still, only a few weeks ago, and for nearly the space of 16 years, has she remained as motionless as when I first beheld her. She had existed in that state nearly four years previously to my first visit; she was then 53, she is now in her 66th year.

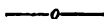
I found she had been the daughter of a respectable shop-keeper, and that after her father's death, she had carried on a like occupation. She was much respected, both as a tradeswoman, and as a consistent member of the Wesleyan community, and her business, notwithstanding her having been too ready to trust others, (by which she lost several hundred pounds) was prospering, when she was seized with violent pains and loss of power in her wrist and other joints, which increased so fearfully, spite of medical treatment, that she was compelled for some years, to submit to lie on a bed in an inner room, communicating with her shop, and to leave that to the management of another.

Having, as she told me, an independent spirit and active habits, this was a most trying stroke;



and, as she feared would be the case, she had ere long, the additional misery of seeing all going wrong in her business, which had at length to be relinquished, and she, helpless and powerless, with no relations on whom to depend, saw herself reduced to actual want. In this extremity, dire as it was, her faith and trust in God never forsook her. "Though He slay me, yet will I trust in Him," was her constant and heartfelt exclamation, and the firm persuasion that He would be faithful to His promises, and so never leave, never forsake her, was her never-failing support.

"IN the furnace God may prove thee  
 Thence to bring thee out more bright,  
 But can never cease to love thee,  
 Thou art precious in His sight ;  
 God is with thee  
 God thine everlasting light."



"WHEN the water-floods of grief,  
 Round my helpless head shall rise,  
 When there seemeth no relief,  
 I look towards th' eternal skies ;  
 There I behold how radiantly  
 Beams the Star of Faith Divine :  
 Yesterday it shone for me,  
 And to-day it still will shine ;  
 I ask no aid the world can give  
 But looking unto Jesus—live !"

## CHAPTER IV.

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"Though he fall, he shall not be utterly cast down : for the Lord upholdeth him with His hand."—*Psa.* xxxvii. 24.

"Thou hast been a strength to the poor, a strength to the needy in his distress, a refuge from the storm, a shadow from the heat, when the blast of the terrible ones is as a storm against the wall."—*Isa.* xxv. 4.

"Come unto me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest."—*Matt.* xi. 28.

"Unto the upright there ariseth light in the darkness."—*Psa.* cxii. 4.

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KIND advisers came forward, and counceled a trial of hydropathic treatment, and she was in consequence taken, though with some difficulty, to the abode in which I was first privileged to see her. She was at the time, deprived of all power of motion, save that of raising her hands upwards from the wrists, as her arms lay stiffly by her side, underneath the bed-clothes, and that of turning her head from side to side, or raising it and bending it a little forward.

There she lay, without any attendant, except

the owners of the cottage, (who, I afterwards found, were far from kind to her,) and if even a fly annoyed her, or a scalding tear fell upon her cheeks, (and tears have been known to blister them) she had not the power to raise a hand in her defence. Several times in the course of the day, it was requisite she should be raised from her bed, which could only be effected by two persons, as she had to be kept in a horizontal position; and all her food had to be administered by other hands than her own. Yet, under all this, often enduring agonizing pain, and sleepless nights, frequently not knowing where her next meal was to come from, she was the very personification of patience and pious resignation. Keenly did she *feel* her situation and deprivations, as tears that could not be repressed when sympathy was shewn, too clearly evidenced, but not a murmur ever escaped her; but, "Shall I receive good at the hand of the Lord, and shall I not also receive evil, and Thou in Thy very faithfulness hast afflicted me," were her unrepining thoughts.

"Thou refuge of my weary soul,  
On Thee, when sorrows rise;  
On Thee, when waves of trouble roll,  
My fainting hope relies.

Yes, gracious God ! where can I flee ?  
Thou art my only trust ;  
And still my soul will cleave to Thee  
Though prostrate in the dust."

---

"THE heart by Christ sustained, though deep  
Its anguish, still can live ;  
The soul He condescends to keep  
Shall never know despair ;  
In nature's weakness, sorrow's night,  
God is its strength, its joy, its light."

## CHAPTER V.

“He will regard the prayer of the destitute.”—*Psa.* cii. 17.

“Hearken, my beloved brethren, Hath not God chosen the poor of this world rich in faith, and heirs of the kingdom which He hath promised to them that love Him.”—*James*, ii. 5.

“The Lord is good, a strong hold in the day of trouble; and He knoweth them that trust in Him.”—*Nah.* i. 7.

“God is our refuge and strength, a very present help in trouble.”—*Psa.* xli. 1.

—o—

THE cottage being damp, and totally unfit for a winter's sojourn, she was removed to an adjoining village, where she occupied a neat upper-room in the cottage of a most worthy woman, who for five years waited upon her as she would have done on a beloved sister, and she has since told me that during the whole of that time she never once heard the poor sufferer utter a murmur, and that she was in truth, a living monument of Divine grace.

In this retreat she received the unceasing and

tender attentions of the kind-hearted Vicar and his lovely wife, but she there came also in contact with numbers of her own station in life, and the good she affected both by example and precept will not be known until that day, when all secrets shall be disclosed, and our words as well as works made manifest before an assembled universe.

Oh! how many still consider it a privilege to converse with this patient and cheerful sufferer! not those among her own class in society merely, or even chiefly, but among the higher-bred—the better educated. How enobling is true religion! It fosters a candour, simplicity, and above all, a purity of character truly loveable, and the refinement it imparts is genuine, and thus far more valuable than its specious but deceiving counterfeit so valued in the world.

“Oh for that purity of heart,  
The Gospel only can impart,  
To those who gratefully receive  
Its teachings, and its word believe.  
This is the purity, whose power  
In dark temptation's trying hour  
Can still unchangeably endure  
And pure itself, makes all things pure.”

## CHAPTER VI.

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"The words of the pure are pleasant."—*Prov.* xv, 26.

"The wisdom from above is pure."—*James*, i. 27.

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THEN too, how profound, how exalting are the contemplations which a thorough and saving acquaintance with God's Word induces! The earnest, pious, though otherwise unlearned Christian, has a fund of mental resources, and a range of flight and thought little conceived of by many who value themselves on their superior acquirements.

Without any disparagement of knowledge in general, may we not rather chose to be thoroughly instructed in Divine knowledge than in all other kinds put together, *if taken apart from it?* For, in the eternal world, which will be of most avail? Will a knowledge of languages however vast? There will be but one there.—Will that of the sciences, however profound? There, all

that has cost such an amount of study and effort to acquire, will seem but as a mere drop in an ocean. Ah! "to know God and His Son Jesus Christ is life eternal." If, therefore, we can add to this all other knowledge—well; but all is insignificant in comparison with that.

Forgive me thus, as it were, "thinking aloud," when too, I was in the midst of my little narrative. I will now pass on to say, that among the numerous visitors to the little white cottage had been a gentleman, who resided near the town in which the poor sufferer had lived. He manifested great sympathy, and she was encouraged to speak openly of her state both mentally and physically. Her trials were not concealed, neither were her abounding springs of consolation; admiration was now mingled with pity, and a sovereign then placed in her hand, was but the pledge of farther succour, and from that time to the present, a comfortable abode has always been furnished her by this feeling and generous friend. Here we see an illustration of the old saying, that "Man's extremity is God's opportunity;" for had she possessed the little she thought it so hard to lose by business, her case would have excited less sympathy, and she might have been in greater



need, than by this unexpected liberality she now found herself to be.

By the exertion of her friends, she became an object of relief to the Tradesmen's Society, and obtained from it a small sum annually, but this source was exhausted by the requirements of two attendants whose duty it is to move her at four stated times during the day. Whence then was her sustenance to come? "It never has failed," said she, "I have often wondered where my dinner would come from, but I was sure it would be provided by my God and Father."

"Oh ! for a faith that will not shrink  
 Though pressed by many a foe ;  
 That will not tremble on the brink  
 Of poverty or woe :

That will not murmur or complain  
 Beneath the chastening rod,  
 But in the hour of grief and pain  
 Can lean upon its God ;

A faith that shines more bright, more clear,  
 When tempests rage without,  
 That when in danger knows no fear,  
 In darkness feels no doubt."

## CHAPTER VII.

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“If ye endure chastening, God dealeth with you as with sons ; for what son is he whom the Father chasteneth not ?”—  
*Heb. xii. 7.*

“Many shall be purified, and made white, and tried.”—  
*Dan. xii. 10.*

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THEN, while thus lying night and day in her lonely chamber, she had other wants ; she could not read, because she had no means of turning over the leaves of a book, and the same powerlessness precluded employment of any other kind. The Sabbath too, had to be spent like other days. She could no longer repair, as was her delight, to the House of God, and long hours were to be spent quite alone. But in all these respects, her wants have been as amply supplied as her sad circumstances permitted. Kind friends came forward, and one especially—a tried one also,—leaves each morning her own home, with its comforts and elegancies, to spend an hour or two in this humble chamber, reading and other-

wise ministering to the poor prisoner. She is likewise regularly visited by a Clergyman in the vicinity, who frequently administers to her the Sacrament of the Lord's Supper. Others there are, who throughout this tedious confinement have unremittingly paid her all the attention in their power, feeling I believe at the same time, that their efforts in her behalf were more than repaid by the benefit they derived from her saint-like demeanour.

Many, when in distress, go to that lowly chamber, in order to receive encouragement and consolation, and many an interesting conversation could be given were it admissible to do so. St. Paul says, "Blessed be God, even the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of Mercies, and God of all Consolation, who comforteth us in all our tribulations, that we may be able to comfort those that are in any trouble, *by the comfort wherewith we ourselves are comforted of God.*"

Without any breach of confidence, I may, I think, give you a somewhat striking proof of her integrity of character. It can scarcely be considered a private detail, being from its nature known to many—it is this,—When her misfortunes compelled her to relinquish her business, she was

unable to recover various sums owing to her, which, had they been paid, would have left her mistress of a few hundreds, instead of which, she found herself a few pounds in debt. This greatly distressed her, but what could she do? No one, of course, expected payment under her circumstances; but no sooner did kind friends come forward to contribute to her maintenance, than she deprived herself of everything in the way of sustenance, save the barest necessities, and by this means she scraped together, after the lapse of years, the small sum she owed, and every farthing was paid. One firm, that had formerly supplied her shop with one of its articles, refused to take the money, but there was no choice, it must be paid—she could not die in debt. The following day the amount was returned in goods suited to her present wants. This shews the estimation in which her character was held. Then again, a distant relative died, and left her a small sum of money. This was instantly sent to the gentleman who had had the generosity for so many years to pay her rent. She thus did what she could; and oh! that all would follow her course! What misery would be spared! Bankrupts would not then shield themselves under the protecting

arm of the law, from the payment of their just debts: it would rather be the grand effort of their lives to discharge those obligations, from which the law, but not their consciences, had freed them.

When passing lately through the town in which this dear invalid now resides, (she having been removed from the village, when hydropathy, like all else, had proved unavailing,) she was, of almost all others, the one I most longed to see, and several hours, at different times, were spent by her bed-side. I found the same sweet and animated expression of countenance, and the same cordial greeting, and though now in her 66th year, an aspect on which even now, the casual observer would not see the stamp of disease; but her posture was greatly altered; for though she still lies on her back, yet by means of an air bed and pillows, it is rather an erect than a reclining one, on account of a dropsical complaint which has now supervened—and she assured me that her legs and feet were in such a state of inflation, that her attendants feared to touch them.

On one of my recent visits, I found her even more than usually cheerful, and soon discovered she had been much gratified by a

change which had been effected in her little establishment. This had blessed her with two female attendants, who she hoped were really guided by Christian principles, whose countenances, she said, were pleasant for her to look upon, and whose kind and gentle voices sounded like music to her ears. Poor soul! she has become sensitive, and her nerves vibrate to every look, touch, and sound from those about her. "I am only afraid," she added, "of being too comfortable."

"Too comfortable!" I could not but exclaim, as I gazed upon the poor stretched out prisoner before me, and thought of her deprivations and pains, with her solitary hours, long days, and often sleepless nights. "*You* too comfortable!" I repeated, "could that be?"

"Yes," she added, "for I often find if one trouble is removed, another comes; so I must not be too comfortable."

All is indeed *comparative* here below!—our pains, our joys, our all—comparative, both as to our own experience and to that of others also! Might not the fretful, the fastidious, and the repining, learn a lesson of contentment, patience, and thankfulness from the pious inmate of this

little chamber? May the lesson not be lost on me!—

“BRIGHTER than rainbow in the north,  
More cheering than the matin lark,  
Is the soft gleam of Christian worth,  
Which in some holy house we mark ;  
Dear to the Pastor’s aching heart  
To think, where ’er he looks such gleam may  
have a part ;

May dwell unseen by all but Heaven,  
Like diamond blazing in the mine ;  
For even where such grace is given,  
It fears in open day to shine.  
Lest the dust-stain it owns within  
Break out, and faith be shamed by the  
Believer’s sin.”

---

“DEAR patient Sufferer, who could see,  
Thy cheerful smile in sorrow’s hour,  
Or mark the soul’s serenity,  
And not adore Almighty power ?

For what but grace, most largely given,  
Could soften years of slow decay,  
And make thy room the gate of Heaven,  
And chase each gloomy thought away ?

No murmuring, sad complaint was thine,  
Nor low distrust of love Divine,  
Submission to th’ unerring will,  
Thy fears were hush’d, thy heart was still,  
And thou could’st peaceful lie and calm,  
A lamb within the Saviour’s arms.”

## CHAPTER VIII.

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“Every branch that beareth fruit, He purgeth it, that it may bring forth more fruit.”—*John*, xv. 2.

“My grace is sufficient for thee : for My strength is made perfect in weakness.”—*2 Cor.* xii. 9.

“They shall still bring forth fruit in old age, they shall be fat and flourishing.”—*Psa.* xcii. 14.

“He giveth power to the faint.”—*Isa.* xl. 29.

“He shall not be afraid of evil tidings : his heart is fixed, trusting in the Lord.”—*Psa.* cxii. 7.

“Unto you that fear My Name shall the Sun of Righteousness arise with healing in His wings.”—*Mal.* iv. 2.

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ALL in that chamber of sickness was (as I last saw it) the perfection of neatness, and from herself to the very walls, (on which her thoughtful friend had suspended prints of our Saviour and other sacred subjects for her solitary contemplations)—all spoke of Heaven, rather than of earth. Over her cap was pinned a neat little shawl, and each Sunday this is exchanged for one that once



belonged to a young lady whose visits, from the sweetness of her disposition, and her spirituality of mind she greatly valued, and with whom, and from the hand of this lovely girl's affianced, she had partaken of the blessed memorials of the Saviour's dying love. This young disciple seemed meet for heaven, and has been called to her bright home before the aged one with whom she loved to converse on the subject of the Christian's hopes and Christian's joys. The bed clothes, delicately clean, were pinned up round her shoulders, as, if they receded, no hand of her's could replace them; and on her little table was her Bible, with sundry favourite books, ready for the visitor's use. That she might not die in the night, like one entombed alive, with no means of help from others, a cord has been entwined round the forefinger of her left hand, which communicates with a bell lightly hung, and suspended close to her attendant's pillow, and to which she has just the power of giving a slight pull.

Upon my asking her, ere I bade her "farewell," if she had any want a human friend could supply, she hesitatingly named the only one she felt: she could no longer discern the time of day as marked by her watch on the table by her bed-

side, nor could that tell it her through the night ; she would therefore greatly prize a clock that would strike ; it would be quite a companion for her.

On returning to the house of my young relative, she immediately produced one not needed for her own use, and on the following day we had the pleasure of taking it to the invalid, and of fixing upon the proper spot for its suspension. We have now the gratification of feeling that this trifling gift will help to remind her of us when she offers up her intercessions for her friends, and such prayers I for one, greatly value. One day, after having expatiated very feelingly on the kindness of her benefactor, she said to me, " I cannot repay him in any way, I can but pray for him, and that I *do* do continually and earnestly," and, while saying this in her gentle and loving tone, she raised her head from her pillow, as she is wont to do when she desires to be more than usually emphatic.

May not those who have so long succoured her one day discover, that in this case, the conferrers and the receiver of favours have changed places, and that the former have become greatly her debtors.

For, as the poet beautifully says,—

"ANGELS are around the good man, to catch the incense  
of his prayers,  
And they fly to minister kindness to those for whom  
he pleadeth ;  
For the altar of his heart is lighted, and burneth  
before God continually,  
And he breatheth, conscious of his joy, the native  
atmosphere of Heaven :  
Yea, tho' poor and contemned, and ignorant of this  
world's wisdom,  
Ill can his fellows spare him, though they know not  
of his value."

And again,—

"THE salt preserveth the sea, and the Saints uphold  
the earth,  
Their prayers are the thousand pillars that prop  
the canopy of Heaven."

## CHAPTER IX.

“Lord, Thou hast heard the desire of the humble : Thou wilt cause Thine ear to hear.”—*Psa. x. 17.*

“But know that the Lord hath set apart him that is godly for Himself: the Lord will hear when I call upon Him.”—*Psa. iv. 3.*

“If any man see his brother sin a sin which is not unto death, he shall ask, and he shall give him life for them that sin not unto death.”—*1 John, v. 16.*

“The effectual fervent prayer of a righteous man availeth much.”—*James, v. 16.*

“PRAYER,” one has said, “lifts the believer to a holier and serener region—far, far above the clouds and storms that darken and distract the world below, like travellers in Alpine regions who are often encompassed with a clear atmosphere, and cloudless sunshine, whilst traversing the summit of those lofty mountains, at the very time that the world below is wrapt in mist and darkness, and thunder-clouds are bursting at their feet.

“As some tall cliff that lifts its awful form,  
Swells from the vale, and midway leaves the storm,  
Though round its base the rolling clouds are spread,  
Eternal sun-shine settles on its head.”

“Pray without ceasing.”—*1 Thessa. v. 17.*

Thus lies this "prisoner of hope," waiting for her release; truly "longing, yet not struggling to be free." Her great conflict for years has been to restrain her impatience to depart, and to await, with sufficient patience, God's call. In one of my late visits, I encountered a benevolent Quakeress, (who has been her valued and constant friend throughout the last, to her, long fifteen years,) and thinking aloud, I exclaimed, "Why is she still kept here?" For in a conversation we had just had, she told me that she believed she could now say she felt *entire* resignation and submission to God's will in *every thing*. Her great difficulty (as to her trial) having been to reconcile her mind as fully as she desired, to being fed by others. "Had she but the use of *one* hand?" "Could *but one* be restored!" How natural this! but God willed otherwise; she saw it, sought power to yield up her will to His, and thus her submission to God was perfected.

On hearing my exclamation, her friend replied, "Oh it is not on her own account *she* is kept here;" it is obviously for the good of others." Her example preaches, and many a holy lesson has it taught!

A soul calm and serene in the midst of

storms—sorrowful, yet always rejoicing, meekly accepting whatever is the will of God, however grievous it may be to nature, saying in sickness and in pain, “The cup which my Father hath given me, shall I not drink it?” In loss, or want—“The Lord gave, the Lord hath taken away: Blessed be the Name of the LORD,” such an one speaks with thrilling power to both the Christian and the worldling.”

METHINKS 'twere sweet to soar on high  
And feel the heart grow light,  
To see the gloomy cloud pass by,  
And all around grow bright :

To leave behind the weight of pain,  
And sorrow with her gloomy train,  
God of eternity, from Thee,  
This feeble being came ;  
Thine eye the hidden springs can see  
Thou know'st its inward frame.

Oh ! as o'er all its varying fate,  
Thine hand supreme presides,  
And tempering affliction's weight  
The stroke in mercy guides,  
With meek submission let me bend  
And thine unseen design attend.

## CHAPTER X.

WHEN I am in heaviness I will think upon my God.  
I call to remembrance my song ; and in the night I commune  
with mine own heart, and search out my spirit.—  
*Psa.* lxxvii. 3, 6.

THOU art like night, oh sickness, deeply stilling  
Within my heart the world's disturbing sound,  
And the dim quiet of my chamber filling  
With low sweet voice, by life's tumult drown'd.

Thou art like night ! Thou gatherest around  
The things that are unseen, tho' close they lie,  
And with the truth, clear, startling and profound,  
Giv'st them dread presence to our mental eye.

Thou art like starry spiritual night !  
High and immortal thoughts attend thy way,  
And revelations, which the common light  
Brings not, tho' wakening with its rosy ray  
All outward life.—Be welcome then, Thy rod  
Before whose touch my soul unfolds itself to God.

YOU and I dear S—, have found how *far* easier it  
is to *do* than to *suffer* the will of God, it appears  
to me, that when *doing* what seemed His will,  
*self* is often flattered ; not so when passively

bearing it. The power of true religion is therefore far more obvious when the Christian is called upon for patient endurance rather than for active exertion. But minds are so differently constituted, the habits, views, circumstances, and situations in life so varied, and our physical constitution so diverse, that one species of trial affects not all with equal force, nor cuts with equal poignancy, and one human being may be censured for bearing ill a trial which to another would be comparatively light. "The heart knoweth its own bitterness," and He who appoints the stroke can alone estimate its power to wound, and if it be very keen, very heavy, yet we have the blessed consolation of knowing, that "He does not afflict willingly the children of men, and that out of evil He will educe good if we frustrate not her counsels, and this consideration is most comforting, Is it not?"

Have you not found in your own sad experience, how very few of our fellow beings seem to understand the art of administering consolation to the afflicted? Many, when attempting to do so, seem to me strangely to misapply Scripture, from not sufficiently discriminating as to the apparent purport of the trial, or as to the state of mind and feeling of the sufferer, and thus



rather irritate than soothe ; for instance, the tried one is sometimes urged, when smarting from a blow agonizing to the heart, and perhaps recently inflicted, "to rejoice in tribulation." At such a moment, methinks, the consoler would often do well to remember to Apostolical injunction, "To weep with those who weep," which would surely under such circumstances be more generally in accordance with the example set us by our compassionate Saviour !

On this point I will quote a passage I lately met with,—

"When Providence smiles, the Word of God allows us to be joyful, when it frowns, the word calls us to serious thoughtfulness. God does not require us to rejoice in what is evil, nor to grieve for what is good. It is true, as Christians, we are taught to deny ourselves in the midst of outward prosperity, and to rejoice in the midst of tribulation ; but it is only because they are the proper fruits of religious principles, and the means of promoting our highest ultimate good. We are not required to take sweet for bitter, or bitter for sweet ; but as prosperity, which is in itself joyful, may become ruinous to our spiritual interests, we are warned against its dangers, while we are taught

that adversity, however bitter, is the wholesome medicine by which our spiritual health may be preserved. In a word, the Bible regards each of these states chiefly as it respects the moral influence on our hearts; while it admits that the one is joyful and the other painful, it teaches us that each has its peculiar and proper uses, and that in both we are to have a supreme regard to those great religious principles, which alone can render prosperity safe, and by their force and buoyancy, so far outweigh all sorrow, as to seem almost to convert it to a source of joy. Still we are nowhere taught to reverse the dictates of nature so as to regard prosperity *in itself* as evil, or adversity good; on the contrary, the former is declared to be the proper source of joy and a strong motive for gratitude, while the latter is declared as, for the present not joyous, but grievous." Accordingly there are duties appropriate to each. The whole advantage of affliction depends upon a Scriptural consideration of it. It does not operate as a charm, it is only to them, who are "exercised thereby," that it becomes the means of producing "the peaceable fruits of righteousness."

Adversity is a serious thing, and we should learn the lesson it is intended to teach, whether

we view it as a trial or test of our faith—a discipline, or chastisement. Then through whatever instrumentality it comes, it must be finally traced to the Hand of God. “Shall we receive good at the hand of God, and shall we not receive evil?” “Is there evil in the city, and the Lord hath not done it? Wherefore doth a living man complain, a man for the punishment of his sins?” “The rod and reproof give wisdom. In short, every occurrence whether prosperous or adverse, helps a good man. He cannot finally lose even by his afflictions, for they shall all be turned to his advantage, “All things shall work together for good, to them who love God.”

CHAPTER XI.

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“ God’s people have much reason to be wary and thoughtful while in temporal prosperity, and it is their privilege and duty to rejoice even in the darkest night of adversity ; a long series of earthly prosperity is accompanied with so many dangers, that he who really regards as of first moment the salvation of his soul, will find that a holy seriousness of spirit, and a habit of thoughtful consideration are essential to his security ; while a season of adversity, if it be the blessed means of renewing or establishing his communion with God, will be an occasion of joy, such as the world can neither give, nor take away.”

I was conversing rather lengthily on this very subject with the sufferer above alluded to, and her remark was, “ Those who so harshly bid one to welcome suffering, and to rejoice in it as a good, little know themselves what it is.” It is one thing to rejoice in God, and another to rejoice in pain *as pain*, and she added, “ Did not our

Saviour Himself cry, "If it be possible let this cup pass from me," though He added, as we must do, "Nevertheless, not my will but Thine be done."

On the above text, the Rev. Hugh White writes, "That the cup of affliction is unpalatable to human nature, even when most fully renewed by Divine Grace, is a truth confirmed by the experience of the holiest children of God in every age, and that it is not expected by Him who knows our frame, that it should be regarded as otherwise than distasteful, is manifest from the declaration of the Apostle, who certainly made as light of the heaviest weight of affliction as it is within the reach of the most exalted Christian to do, while on earth, and yet declares that "no chastening seemeth to be joyous but grievous." We are privileged to draw from the narration of the Saviour's mysterious agony in the garden, the consolatory conclusion, that it is not in itself sinful to shrink from suffering: that human nature, as such, by the appointment of its Divine Author, dreads, and desires to escape from the endurance of overwhelming anguish; for, even when taken into union with the Divine, it felt and displayed this desire and dread. And, therefore,

if on other grounds, we have Scriptural warrant to hope that we are children of God, we need not fear our claim to the title is invalidated, because in the prospect of some tremendous trial, (from which, with bleeding heart and shuddering soul, we shrink back) we pray like The Redeemer, "Oh! my Father! if it be possible, let this cup pass from me," provided we add like Him, "nevertheless, not my will, but Thine be done."

"Thus every where we find our suffering God,  
And where He trod  
May set our steps; the Cross on Calvary  
Uplifted high  
Beams on the martyr's host, a beacon light,  
In open sight.

To the still wrestling of the lonely heart,  
He doth impart,  
The virtue of His midnight agony,  
When none was nigh,  
Save God, and one good Angel, to assuage  
The tempest rage.

O Father! not my will, but Thine be done,  
So spake the Son.  
Be this our charm, mellowing earth's ruder noise,  
Of griefs and joys,  
That we may cling for ever to Thy breast  
In perfect rest."



St. James indeed says, "Count it all joy when

ye fall into divers temptations ;” and Bishop Hopkins makes these remarks, “ Strange command this ! and one which seems so contrary to nature certainly needeth to be enforced by some strong motive. This the Apostle gives. “ Knowing that the trying of your faith worketh patience,” and patience is of itself such a Christian excellence and perfection, that all trials tending to increase this, are to be reckoned a gain and advantage. If God augments and confirms thy faith and patience, under suffering, then they are mercies, and afflictions’ favours. He crowns thee with Glory, while He seems to crown thee with thorns.” It is far better, therefore, to have patience under afflictions than to be freed from them : it is more cause for joy to suffer the Hand and Will of God, than not to suffer at all.

## CHAPTER XII.

AFTER all, my dear S—, great consideration and discrimination seem needful on this subject. Afflictions in themselves are evils ; they are but means to an end, and if they do not assist in perfecting the Christian character, and help on in the heaven-ward course, those who endure them are of all men the most miserable, having neither the blessings of this life, nor those of the world to come,—our afflictions “working for us an eternal weight of glory, only when we look not at the things which are seen, but at the things which are not seen, for the things which are seen are temporal, but the things which are not seen are eternal.” It seems to me, therefore, that unless we feel confident that, by God’s assistance, we can endure them so as to turn them into benefits, we should be cautious ere we count it “all joy” when we fall into them.

Do we indeed feel assured that by God’s sustaining grace, they will afford opportunities for



glorifying Him, and for setting our seal, as it were, on the sincerity of our professions, and for proving the power that vital religion possesses, to uphold and comfort under all circumstances ; then indeed we may rejoice in the hope, that they will wreath for us a more glorious crown, and procure for us a richer reward when called to our eternal inheritance.

Should we not also discriminate between trials which may be viewed as chastisements, and those which falling on devoted followers of our Lord, may well be considered primarily as tests of their faith and love, or as a refiner's fire to purify them from all remaining dross ?

In the former case, humility and self-abasement would surely be the becoming characteristics of the recipient ; for who could not but feel humbled that chastisement should be required ? The rod may be kissed as coming from a Father's hand, and be received as a proof of Son-ship, (for what son is he whom the Father chasteneth not," and we are assured that " Whom He loveth, He chasteneth, and" even " scourgeth every son whom He receiveth,") but to count chastisement "all joy" would certainly be unfitting even were it possible. And would the design be fulfilled did they im-

mediately cause "joy"? If pain ceased to be pain, where would be the correction? No correction would in fact be needed by one who could so meet the affliction as legitimately and truly to count it "all joy." It would cease to be chastisement, although it might remain a trial or test of love and obedience.

May we not thus reconcile dear S—, the apparently clashing statements of St. Paul, that "No chastening for the present is joyous, but grievous, with the injunction of St. James, to "count it all joy when ye fall into divers temptations;" and also with St. Paul's own assertion, that he "joyed exceedingly" in tribulation, and will it not also explain why our Saviour should have besought His Father to allow His cup of agony to pass from Him, rather than have welcomed it with "all joy," for were not *our sins* laid upon Him? Did He not bear our *chastisements*?

But *can* even Christ's undoubted followers *always* count trials "all joy?" If smitten like Job, for example,—in mind, body and estate,—bereft at a stroke of health, property, and friends? Do we see it? If not, ought it so to be? Again, suppose that by sudden blindness the avenues of

rational pleasure and usefulness should be closed to one, to whom such a calamity would be the keenest of strokes—would he be called upon to rejoice? Do we see it? Does not such an one, (though with humble, uncomplaining spirit,) seek to have his stroke removed, and to regain the precious power of sight? Were it “all joy” this would not be his course, and so with other evils to which frail humanity seems heir. Now I would here ask, whether we as Christians, are at the present day living up to our privileges in this respect? Ought we not to manifest a like spirit with St. Paul under our various trials, and be at once exceeding joyful under them, and with St. James, “Count them all joy?” Should we by God’s grace endeavour to acquire a martyr’s spirit, (although (it may be) we are lacking a martyr’s opportunity? Is it not an important enquiry, dear S—, for if we are living below our privilege as Christians, we must also be living in the neglect of corresponding duties, and privileges slighted, and duties shunned will not enhance our rewards when all are judged according to their works!”

Give me your views on this point, and tell me also whether you can from experience echo the

following lines, and really know what it is to  
 "triumph over death and time?"

"Sweet the hour of tribulation,  
 When the heart can freely sigh,  
 And the tear of resignation  
 Trembles in the mourner's eye.

While the wounds of woe are healing,  
 While the heart is all resigned,  
 'Tis the solemn feast of feeling,  
 'Tis the Sabbath of the mind ;

To Heaven all our wishes tending  
 Rise in ecstasy sublime,  
 Thither all our hopes ascending  
 Triumph over death and time."

## CHAPTER XIII.

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MAY I not suggest that such injunctions as "Count it all joy, when we fall into divers temptations," and the like; may *rather* have had reference to those who by God's Providence were called to give their testimony in the cause of Christ and His Gospel, and to seal it with their blood? They were called to a peculiar work, and were supported by miraculous assistance. In this sacred soul-stirring cause "They counted not their lives dear unto them," and "they took joyfully the spoiling of their goods," and then, if faithful unto death—a martyr's crown, with an eternal weight of glory was to be awarded them. In such a cause with such succour from above, and so glorious a recompence in view, would not even their great "fight of afflictions" be so eclipsed by their vivid realization of future glory, as actually to be lost in the bright vision ever before them? Let me have your views on this point also.

Some there are who come not themselves into

the region of great afflictions and trials, they are allowed to tread on the flowers and bask in the sunbeams of earth, and yet maintain spirituality of mind. Their lot (but it is a rare one) seems doubly happy, embracing the blessings of this life, as well as of that which is to come. The venerable Swartz was of opinion, that there are few in Heaven but owe their conversion, or their continuance in that state, to some stroke or other."

Herbert quaintly says,—

" THERE is but joy and grief :  
 If either will convert us, we are Thine :  
 Some Angels used the first ; if our relief  
 Take up the second, then Thy double line  
     And several baits in either kind  
     Furnish Thy table to Thy mind.

Afflictions then is ours :  
 We are the trees whom shaking fastens more,  
 While blust'ring winds destroy the wanton bowers  
 And ruffle all their curious knots and store.  
     My God ! so temper joy and woe  
     That Thy bright beams may tame Thy bow."



We have but one source of light, by which we can become acquainted with God's dispensations

towards us, whether providential or otherwise ; and to that we must go, for a knowledge of our position, our duties, and our future destiny. The Bible is not silent on the subject of affliction. "It speaks even much of it," says one to whom I have referred, and he adds, "Did it exhibit the believers of olden times as prosperous, untried men, we might envy their lot, without imitating their virtues. They would be considered as beings under a different aspect, and as having very little affinity with us ; but when it presents them to our view as men exposed to the same trials, infirmities, and afflictions, we feel they are brothers in sorrow, and are interested in seeing how they were comforted. They passed, it is said, "through a great fight of affliction," yet the Gospel was adequate to their support.

And now, that I may not weary rather than soothe, I will draw this already lengthy communication to a close ; only adding, by way of *finale*, a remark I met with a few days ago, and which I think is somewhat striking, if not arousing also.

"Affliction," says my authority, "is an opportunity of glorifying God, the most precious perhaps that earth can afford ; one which can only be found in a world of sorrow ; one which is

the especial privilege of the saints in tribulation ; for saints in blessedness no longer thus testify their gratitude to Him who died for them, or thus seek to advance His glory. No channel for thus evincing gratitude to their Saviour is to be found in Heaven, and if the precious privilege be not improved on earth, it will never again be within our reach. Should not afflictions, viewed in this light, assume in the believer's eyes a more endearing aspect, than they ever before were known to wear ?”

Sweet, it is said, are the *uses* of adversity. Oh ! may you and I, dear S—, find this to be *our* experience ! Let us henceforth endeavour to co-operate with the designs of a merciful Providence, remembering, that however sad or disturbed our fate may be, all is ordered by a Being of Infinite Benevolence and Power,—

“WHOSE everlasting purposes embrace  
All accidents, converting them to good.”

In weal or woe, ever Yours.



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